

SAXTON CRICKET CLUB
CLUB DEVELOPMENT PLAN
December 2001

**“In preparing for battle, I have always found that
plans are useless, but planning indispensable.”**

- Gen. D. Eisenhower

VISION STATEMENT

**Saxton Cricket Club aims to have a happy, healthy and
well-run village cricket club in which everyone
does their bit for the good of the Club.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CLUB DEVELOPMENT PLAN (CDP), December 2001

Introduction

The purpose of this CDP is to provide an outline of Saxton Cricket Club's past and present position, and to identify priorities and establish management systems to help it become a well-run village cricket club.

Context

The Club has provided the sporting focal point for Saxton and its locality for 150 years. During this time the Club has leased land to play on, thereby obviating investment and forcing it to run "on the cheap" (with members doing little for the Club). Recently however, the Club has made progress as follows:-

- creation of a juniors section (which now has 47 juniors and 7 qualified coaches)
- establishment of management systems and responsibilities in key areas (e.g. finance, fixtures, grounds)
- award of 2nd prize, Taylors of Harrogate's Community Cricket Club of the Year
- members volunteering to do tasks and becoming altogether more business-like in Club dealings
- gift of land to Club from former landowner.

The need to develop the latter has forced the Club to consider its current position and future direction.

Current Position

The Club has taken the advice of various sports development officers and reviewed its current position and future direction in line with the Yorkshire Cricket Board's Club Development Planner.

Appliance of this guidance has established that the Club is now quite well organized, though it still has no fund-raising culture, and communication of selection to members is variable. Its square also suffers from low bounce, and its (new) ground is also inadequate to accommodate its popular juniors section.

Future Priorities

In view of the foregoing, the Club's priorities are now as follows:-

- raising the profile of fund-raising and trying different ways to attract support from different sources
- ground expansion/development and management to accommodate juniors (and others)
- sustainable management of juniors
- members to do spring-rolling
- captains/vice-captains to communicate selection matters to members better.

The Club's Juniors Development Plan (JDP) deals with the sustainable management of the juniors in more detail, as does the Ground Development Plan (GDP) the ground expansion/development. The CDP concentrates on the other issues referred to above.

Conclusion

Although the Club is now quite well-organised and more business-like, its ground constrains the development of its popular juniors section. The Club therefore needs to expand and redevelop its ground. To do this properly, the Club also needs to develop a fund-raising culture.

SAXTON CRICKET CLUB
CLUB DEVELOPMENT PLAN

December 2001

1. Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this Club Development Plan (CDP) is to provide the basis for the efficient and effective development and management of Saxton Cricket Club (“the Club”).

It provides an outline of the Club’s history, an overview of its current position, and provides a statement of the aims and objectives that the Club wants to achieve by 2007. In short, it asks:

- what have we got now?
- what do we want?
- how will we get there?
- when will we get there?
- who is responsible (and for what)?
- what will it cost?

Context

Further to being given some land to own in August 2001, various sports development officers have advised the Club to consider its current position and future direction. In doing so, the Club has followed the guidance set out in the Yorkshire Cricket Board’s Club Development Planner.

In line with the guidance therein, this CDP focuses on the long term future, and concentrates only on areas of genuine need or ambition that are capable of being achieved realistically. It also contains documents designed to improve the day-to-day and year-to-year running of the Club (see Appendices) so as to act as a compendium or reference document for Club officers.

Aims

The CDP aims to set out basic principles and to inform two other key documents - the Club’s Juniors Development Plan (JDP) and its Ground Development Plan (GDP).

Potential Benefits

The achievement of these aims as set out in the CDP will bring about the following:-

- continued existence of the Club and enjoyment of village cricket in the locality
- good coaching, facilities, enjoyment and opportunities for all
- sense of community and well-being within the village
- an attractive ground in a lovely and tranquil setting
- a blue print for survival for any other small club with limited resources.

2. **Background**

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief overview of the Club's history.

Context

Saxton is a small village in North Yorkshire with some 200 houses and 350 residents. It lies 7km south of Tadcaster, and 3km north west of Sherburn-in-Elmet. Villages in the vicinity include Barkston Ash, Scarthingwell, Towton and Aberford. The Club has provided the sporting focal point for these small settlements for almost 150 years.

Early History

The Club dates back to at least 1860, and may well have existed for some time before. "Old Man Bailley", the great grandfather of a current member, maintained that his own grand-father had first played cricket for Saxton in 1860 (but could remember cricket being played well before that date). It would be reasonable therefore to assume that the Club started in at least 1855. Reference to historical maps supports this view.

Reputation

The Club has enjoyed a degree of notoriety in the area for the "agricultural" nature of its ground: In the days before the Club could afford a mower or heavy roller, livestock grazed the cricket field, leaving their mark as they did so; as such, opposition teams experienced difficulties in both diving for the ball and retrieving balls from the many cow pats dotted around the field!

Tenure

At some time after the second world war, Stanley Bayston, granted the Club a formal license to use the cricket field. The Club renewed this license annually, firstly with Mr Bayston's widow, Mrs Betty Bayston, and thereafter with her daughter, Mrs Margaret Edmondson. In doing so, the Club has provided a commuted sum to the Church each year on behalf of the Bayston family.

Pavilion

The Club has had at least three different types of pavilion structure. According to local residents, the first was a wooden structure with an upper storey comprising a small box for the scorers. A smaller wooden hut replaced this first structure, possibly in the 1950s, and was in turn superseded by a converted portakabin in c.1991/2.

Members

Local farm workers have provided the traditional base of Club members. However, as farming has become less labour-intensive, the Club's membership has become more diverse. Although the Club has always had a wide spread of age groups amongst its members, it has only recently started a juniors section.

The fact that the Club did not own a ground prevented investment and development in the Club and the "cricket field". This has in effect forced the Club to do things on the cheap, and also left it directionless and dying on its feet: By 1999, the Club had lost large numbers of members, and was failing to attract any younger players to replace them on account of the small size of the ground and general lack of facilities.

Worse still, certain individuals (e.g. secretary, groundsman) had become overloaded whilst most members did next to nothing, and committee positions were remaining vacant. The Club was also in a poor financial state, in part due to the lack of any match fee collection system (i.e.

members promising to “pay later” but not doing so). Perhaps the lowest point came at the AGM in 2000, when 5 key officers (Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, 1st and 2nd XI captains) all resigned due to overload.

Something had to change. It did. The remaining members set up simple systems to record annual/weekly subscriptions, sought to attract new players and tried to engender a Club culture in which “many hands make light work” and everyone did “their bit for the Club”.

These same members also added officers’ “job descriptions” to the Club’s Constitution as a means of encouraging other members to get involved, and published a “contacts and duties” list in the Club’s newsletter so as to recognise those doing things for the Club (and shame those doing nothing!) These members also set up a juniors section, and not long after grateful parents began to volunteer for key tasks.

The Appendices contain many of the above-mentioned items, and the Juniors Development Plan outlines the steps by which the Club intended to develop its juniors section.

Community

The Club facilitated women’s cricket in the post-war years. Local resident Mrs Middleton relates how seriously this was taken, and that the women wore blue scarves when playing.

The Club has enjoyed strong ties with both the Plough and Greyhound public houses, and also the village school, which has used the cricket field for its sports activities (including Sports Day).

In 2000, the Club set up a formal link with the school. Two members gave up their time to go in to the school for one afternoon every month and taught the children there cricket (i.e. as part of PE lessons). In addition, the school gained support from a local educational charity for the Club to help it set up and develop juniors cricket in the village.

Patronage

It is an important historical fact that Mr and Mrs Bayston allowed the Club the use of their field for cricket. Without this generosity, it is doubtful that the Club would be in existence today.

In August 2001, their daughter, Mrs Margaret Edmondson, decided to give the Club the freehold of part of the cricket field, and to sell Saxon Holme with an adjoining paddock. In recognition of this generosity, the Club made Mrs Edmondson its first Life Member.

Ground Development

In order to develop the ground and maximise grant funding in this respect, it became clear to the Club that it needed to have a ground development plan. The Club was comfortable in doing so: the formulation of a juniors development plan two years earlier had led to the Club securing unprecedented sums of money for juniors-related costs and had ultimately led to a flourishing juniors section with 47 juniors and 7 qualified coaches.

Further to attending a Sport England/Volunteer Investment Programme course however, it also became clear to the Club Chairman that the Club needed to determine in what direction to head in, at a more fundamental level, and in particular that the Club needed to develop a Club Development Plan before embarking on a Ground Development Plan.

3. Current Position

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the Club as it stands at present, and in particular to identify the main strengths and weaknesses relating to it.

Constitution

The Club has its own constitution as adopted at its AGM in 1990 and amended at AGMs thereafter (see Appendix A). The Constitution covers the following: name; objectives; membership; subscriptions and match fees; officers; committee; accounts; general meetings; alterations to rules; local sponsors; disciplinary action; Saxton Cricket Trust (i.e. ground-owning vehicle); annual donation to village church (i.e. a condition of gift of land).

The Club's constitution allows all members (inc. juniors) to vote at the Club AGM (by proxy if necessary). A parent (1 only) may vote on behalf of the junior concerned.

The Constitution has an annex which provides job specifications for each officer. This transparency helps to avoid doubt as to what role and responsibilities an officer is expected to fulfil, and also helps to recruit new officers. It also helps to ensure a relatively equal distribution of labour amongst officers serving on the committee.

The Club considers its constitution is in good order, and that major changes are unnecessary.

Management

The Club is ECB/YCB affiliated. Membership is open to all - the Constitution even has an equal opportunities policy. Members comprise a broad church (male/female; playing/non-playing; OAPs/juniors etc), and officers holding committee positions are representative of Club members as a whole. Committee meetings are held on a monthly basis and cover a range of issues in a systematic manner (e.g. fixtures, finance, fund-raising, grounds, juniors). The Chairman is responsible for the management of the Club, and recognises and thanks the efforts of officers and others at both the Club dinner and the AGM.

The juniors coaches hold regular meetings to discuss safety/selection/practice issues. The full committee meets once a month, the captains once a week in the summer to discuss selection and then post team sheets on the village notice boards (and communicate with selected members as appropriate). However, the senior match selection seems to have broken down recently.

There have been problems with players not wanting to play for a specific team, although this seems to have diminished recently.

Although the Club considers that its management structure, systems and style are a strength rather than a weakness, and that fundamental improvements are unnecessary, there is a need for a better match selection/communication system.

Membership

The Club has 32 "regular" playing members and another 19 members who play from time to time (even if only 1 match per season). It also has 47 junior members (and therefore c.94 parents), 24 "social" (i.e. non-playing members), and upto 50 match ball sponsors within the local community. The Club has no qualified umpires or scorers. The Club does not seek to poach players from existing clubs, only to retain those who contribute to the Club. On average the Club has recently lost 2 players and gained 6 new ones per year.

The Club's secretary is responsible for all communication. The Club has a website featuring fixtures, juniors match reports, juniors match cancellations and a (juniors) rogues gallery. It can be found at: www.saxton.play-cricket.com/home/home.asp

The Club has a wide range of professional skills. Members (including parents) include the following: accountant; lawyer; doctor; planner; development surveyor; quantity surveyor; builder; farmer; brewer; salesman; computer technician; librarian; plant hire firm manager; landscape manager; other.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Club sometimes needs players for matches, and is concerned that a few dedicated players are nearing the end of their playing life. It also feels it is short of social members. The small size of the ground and lack of facilities have been major barriers in attracting new players.

The Club has improved enormously in terms of the quantity and quality of members, but still has some way to go before it has a sufficient base to keep the wolf from the door.

Juniors

The Club has a strong juniors section. Although only set up in 2000, it has 7 qualified coaches and 47 juniors (boys and girls). It has 2 league teams (U-11s and U-13s), and is considering the possibility of a third (U-15s) in 2003. The U-13s recently reached the final of the Wetherby League Cup. The Club has a formal link with Saxton Primary School. The Club offers practice sessions on Wednesday evenings (except when there are League matches). The Club has a dedicated juniors coach who is responsible for the smooth running of the juniors section.

A major benefit of the juniors is that parents help out, and in particular have occupied key officer roles (e.g. Treasurer, Fundraiser, Secretary) that members would not otherwise occupy. Each team has a designated coach (to handle matters on the field) and a manager (to handle matters off the field). Child protection and safety are of paramount importance, and the Club provides parents and juniors with guidelines as to ground rules so that everyone knows both what to expect and what is expected of them in return.

The Club nominates players for trials from time to time. One junior was recently selected to represent the Lords Taverners. The Club is fully insured for juniors cricket, and also ensures that coaches have full personal insurance cover.

The juniors section is almost self-financing. Each junior pays a £10 subscription and completes a standard registration form (that covers name, address etc, and also any special needs that coaches should be aware of). This covers the annual member's fee (£5) that all Club members must pay, and any related costs (e.g. kit, indoor nets hire, coaches' insurance cover etc).

The strength and success of the juniors section is due to the action arising from the Club's excellent (exemplary?) Juniors Development Plan (JDP). This helped to raise £6,500 in 1999-2000, an exceptional achievement for a small club with limited resources.

Although there is always room for improvement, the Club considers that its juniors section is one of its major strengths, and that fundamental improvements are unnecessary.

Fixtures

The Club runs 5 seniors sides (1st XI, 2nd XI, Thursday Evening XI, Club XI - for friendlies - and

an indoor 6-a-side team) and 2 juniors sides (U-13s and U-13s). An 8th side is planned for next year (U-15s) and the Club has made tentative inquiries to other clubs about the possibility of starting a ladies “cluster” XI.

The Club is a member of the Wetherby and District Cricket League (WDCL). The Club’s 1st and 2nd XIs play WDCL matches on Saturdays, and in WDCL cup competitions too. The Club’s U-11s and U-13s play in the WDCL juniors league and cup competitions. The Club also plays in the Elmet Evening Cricket League on Thursday evenings, and plays the odd friendly on Sundays. Being a member of both the WDCL and EECL means that the Club receives official fixtures from the League; this saves a lot of time and effort accordingly.

The Club has a dedicated fixtures secretary on the committee, who is responsible for arranging and checking all fixtures (except those of the juniors), and for preparing an annual fixtures list with match ball sponsors’ names for matches as appropriate. The Club should ensure the fixtures secretary arranges juniors matches, so as to avoid overload of the coaches themselves.

Finance

The Club runs 3 separate bank accounts (seniors, juniors and pavilion fund). Experience has taught the Club to develop and use a match fee form to provide the basis of the collection of match fees (see appendices). This has made administration easier, provided greater accountability and led to greater financial stability than was the case before (i.e. when members could “get away” with promising to pay weekly subs later, only for the captain to forget who had not paid). The Club is fortunate to have an accountant who checks and approves the annual account on an informal year-end basis. The club has a dedicated Treasurer.

The Club has a standard English Cricket Board approved insurance policy (entitled “Extra Cover”) which it renews annually. This covers third party liability.

Although there is always room for improvement, the Club considers that its financial systems are a strength rather than a weakness, and that fundamental improvements are unnecessary.

Facilities

The Club has ownership of a field and informal tenure (for at least another year) of part of another for the purpose of playing cricket. The Club owns a tractor, roller and mowers. It also has a first aid kit, which it replenishes each year, and also 4 kit bags of equipment (2 for seniors, 2 for juniors). The current ground has a very attractive setting in a rural landscape.

The Club has a temporary structure (i.e. portakabin) for use as a pavilion. It also has no sightscreens, boundary markers, slip cradle or nets facilities.

Further to the gift of part of its current ground to the Club, the development of the ground has become the major priority for the Club. Due to the detailed and changing considerations concerned however, the Club considers that this fundamental issue warrants a separate development plan – the ground development plan (GDP). A key purpose of the CDP is to identify and define the needs and direction that the GDP will implement at a more detailed level.

Ground Maintenance

The Club has a dedicated groundsman, who is responsible for pitch/ground preparation and maintenance. This he does with aplomb: There is no finer advert or asset to the Club than the groundsman in question, who is both a character and nothing if not a committed Club Man.

This has led to problems, though, as members have taken him for granted or got too used to things being taken care of. Whilst the groundsman has often complained of being left without help, however, he has often turned down offers of help too, thereby making people reticent to offer help again. The state of the pitch has also proved an issue, as it has little or no bounce. Although the latter may be due to a lack of spring-rolling, trying to encourage him to undertake a suitable course has also proved unsuccessful.

The recent appointment of an "Assistant Groundsman" has helped however, not least because the latter has undertaken an Institute of Groundsmanship course. A "Contacts and Duties" list attached to the newsletter (see Appendices) has also helped. It has in effect "named and shamed" those doing nothing for the Club, and thereby led to members volunteering for jobs!

The Club feels it has exhausted almost all possibilities on grounds issues, but hopes to engender interest by way of the ground redevelopment.

Fund-raising

The Club receives income from annual subscriptions (£5 per member) and match fees (£5 per member). It raises funds from its annual letter inviting match ball sponsorship (see appendices), and also from letters to select trusts for grants to help develop the juniors section. In the past the club has raised money from sponsored walks, raffles and tombolas, and more recently the Club has raised funds from events such as a curry morning, a Xmas raffle and participation in the Cricket Foundation's excellent Grand Draw scheme (which has big cash prizes beyond the means of any 1 Club to have, and by which a Club can keep 100% of the ticket proceeds it sells).

Despite encouraging signs, there is little or fund-raising "culture" within the Club. In view of the demands of the ground development, this needs to change.

Local Community

The local village school uses the ground for P.E. lessons from time to time during the summer. The Club has a formal link with the school (established to help set up the juniors), and is now seeking to establish a legal agreement with the latter in order to put the school's use of the field on a formal footing. The Club does not allow any other uses (e.g. dog walking/golf practice).

The Club organises a Juniors Day every year to enhance links between Club/parents/village. It also encourages as many local residents as possible to come to its annual dinner.

The Club does not promote itself in the press or have a sponsorship deal with a local business, nor does it seek to have a link with another school due to the fact that it has enough juniors. However, it does seek and obtain support from local businesses by way of match ball sponsorship (see appendices for standard letter). The Club has infrequent but useful contact with sports development officers from the YCB and the local authority respectively.

The Club has no disabled members or members with special needs. However, the Club's ground development plan will address the potential for such needs as far as is reasonably practicable.

Womens Cricket

The Club has no womens section and only 1 girl in its juniors. The Club has contacted other local clubs to start a "cluster" ladies XI without success, but has not explored other options.

Although the Club feels it has insufficient resources or demand to start a womens section, it does have the potential to be involved in womens cricket as a "cluster" club or other.

4. Future Position

Introduction

Although the Club has made major improvements during last few years, there is still a need for more. However, the Club feels that it is only necessary to make improvements in those areas as identified above as having weaknesses. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to identify the main opportunities and threats facing the Club, and to outline the main actions (and importance and costs attached to them) that the Club will take to address them.

Constitution

The Club considers its constitution is in good order, and that major changes are unnecessary.

Management

Although the Club considers that its management structure, systems and style are a strength rather than a weakness, and that fundamental improvements are unnecessary, there is a need for a better match selection/communication system.

Team captains are to ensure that they communicate with each other (if only by phone) at the start of every week.

This action is a high priority, and has no cost.

Membership

The Club has improved enormously in terms of the quantity and quality of members, but still has some way to go before it has a sufficient base to keep the wolf from the door.

The Club Secretary is to remind members through the newsletter to encourage family, friends and colleagues to join the Club, and to advertise for new players in local newspapers and selected cricket journals. The team captains are to ensure there are 11 players each game, and to ensure that each player gets enough of a game to want to play the next week (i.e. whilst winning is desirable, ultimately it is not essential).

This action is a high priority, and has a limited cost (say £200 max. for advertisements).

Juniors

Although there is always room for improvement, the Club considers that its juniors section is one of its major strengths, and that fundamental improvements are unnecessary.

Fixtures

The Fixtures Secretary is to arrange juniors matches, so as to avoid overload of the coaches.

This action is a medium priority, and has no cost.

Finance

Although there is always room for improvement, the Club considers that its financial systems are a strength rather than a weakness, and that fundamental improvements are unnecessary.

Facilities

Further to the gift of part of its current ground to the Club, the Club considers that this issue warrants a separate ground development plan (GDP). However, the CDP can and should define

the broad direction that the GDP will implement at a more detailed level. In short, the Club feels that it is more important to produce a quality development over time (to attract new players and ensure that the Club continues), rather than rush in to a quick fix due to a lack of resources.

This has a high priority for the Club, and involves substantial costs.

Ground Maintenance

The Club feels it has exhausted almost all possibilities on grounds issues, but will seek to encourage members to do spring-rolling.

Fund-raising

Despite encouraging signs, there is little or fund-raising “culture” within the Club. In view of the demands of a quality ground development, this needs to change.

The Club Chairman, Fund-raiser and other key members need to be positive and demonstrate the ease and benefits of fund-raising in order to empower members by giving them the confidence with which to try to sell raffle tickets etc. Specific ventures the Club needs to try include the following: making the ground available for corporate games; a 100 Club (in which 100 members pay say £1 per month and the Club has a £10 draw every month and a £100 draw every at the Club Dinner every year; match ball sponsorship letter to local residents and businesses; Cricket Foundation draw; curry morning; pro-active targeting of specific grant sources).

This has a very high priority for the Club, and involves only moderate costs.

Local Community

The Club needs to have more contact with sports development officers from the YCB and the local authority respectively. It also needs to address the potential for disabled members/spectators or those with special needs by way of its ground development plan.

The Club Chairman and Groundsman will consider this issue in developing the ground development plan.

This is not a high priority for the Club, given that it has no disabled members.

Womens Cricket

Although the Club feels it has insufficient resources or demand to start a womens section, it does have the potential to be involved in womens cricket as a “cluster” club or other.

The Juniors Coach will explore the potential for a cluster club and/or providing pathways to excellence for girls’ cricket development.

This is not a high priority for the Club, given that it has so few female members.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Having followed the guidance as set out in the Yorkshire Cricket Board's Club Development Planner, the Club has conducted a review of its structure, systems and style, and concluded it is now quite well-organised. However, it still has no fund-raising culture, and communication of selection to members is variable. Its square also suffers from low bounce, and its (new) ground is inadequate to accommodate its popular juniors section.

In view of the forthcoming ground redevelopment, the Club's key priority is raising funds to provide a quality development to accommodate the needs of the Club and its juniors section.

The Club Chairman and others will therefore formulate a ground development plan (GDP) which aims to produce a quality development over time (to attract new players and ensure that the Club continues), and will also empower members to raise funds and also explore/implement other ventures (e.g. making the ground available for corporate games; a 100 Club; match ball sponsorship letter to local residents and businesses; Cricket Foundation draw; curry morning; pro-active targeting of specific grant sources).

In addition, team captains will communicate with each other (if only by phone) at the start of every week, and ensure 11 players each game (and that each player gets enough of a game to want to play the next week). The Club Secretary will also remind and encourage members (via newsletter) to encourage family, friends and colleagues to join the Club, and to advertise for new players in local newspapers/other, and encourage them to do spring-rolling.

The Club Chairman, Groundsman and Juniors Coach will also consider the issue of disabled members/spectators in developing the ground development plan, and explore the potential for a cluster club and/or providing pathways to excellence for girls' cricket development.

APPENDICES